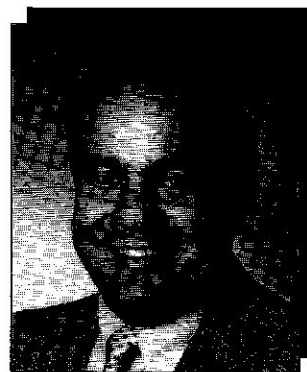


Final Touches

by George P. Kousaleos
National Certification Council Chair



The National Certification Council held its last meeting in Chicago on April 16-19, 1992, returning to the city where the first Steering Committee meeting was held 2 ½ years earlier. The sense of completion was evident as the final touches were added to the examination development process and decisions about the official title, recertification, appeals process, budget, and bylaws were made. Every Council member has shared valuable experience to bring National Certification to fruition.

Here, then, are the most recent developments of the process:

Final Test Form

The Examination Committee met in March 1992 in San Antonio to review the results of the field test and prepare the final test form. Each question was examined closely using the statistical analysis and written feedback from the field test. Items which performed poorly, or those that unfavorably represented one massage and bodywork approach were substituted with items determined to be more generic in nature and better understood by practitioners of various approaches.

Standard Setting Panel

Members of the Standard Setting Panel met at The Psychological Corporation offices in San Antonio in early April to determine the passing score for the upcoming National Certification Examination. The Panel was asked to judge the difficulty of each question based on what percent of entry level practitioners they thought could answer the item correctly.

Most of the members of the Standard Setting Panel had entry level

knowledge. Only two members of the Panel had more than five years experience.

Both the Examination Committee and the Standard Setting Panel have taken a preliminary version of the examination. Their responses varied: "a joy to take," "hard," "objective and relevant," and "not set up for failure."

National Certification Council Meeting

The National Certification Council has completed most of its assigned tasks. A priority item has been the determination of the names for the governing body, the examination, and the certificate designation. After months of getting feedback on this issue, a decision was made to change current names, and to utilize the phrase "Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork" in all three places for consistency and clarity.

The name of the governing body will be the NATIONAL CERTIFICATION BOARD FOR THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE AND BODYWORK; the name of the examination will be the NATIONAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION FOR THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE AND BODYWORK; and the individual designation will be NATIONALLY CERTIFIED IN THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE AND BODYWORK.

The Council has recommended that the future Board and all professional associations continue the discussion of the issue of occupational title.

A recertification plan was adopted that requires recertification every four years. This may be done by retaking the examination, by continuing educa-

tion, or by a combination of continuing education and professional experience. Details of the recertification plan are being studied further.

In other Council news... an appeals process in the areas of eligibility and examination scoring is under development. The Council also completed the first draft of the bylaws for the next governing body, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. In addition, a proposed budget for the 1992-1993 fiscal year was adopted. A goal is to have expenses of the National Certification Program covered by examination fees, and to begin paying back AMTA's loan to the program.

Final Thoughts

The National Certification Program is a visible achievement of our profession. It has been accomplished through the volunteer efforts of many participants. The Program has been discussed, debated, criticized, supported, misunderstood, and acclaimed in one fashion or another. The truth is that we are all looking for a fair representation of who we are, of what we need to know, and of how we can achieve a sense of fulfillment in this noble profession. National Certification can serve as one of the vehicles that will allow us, and those that the profession serves, to continue the search for unity, knowledge, and competence.

I challenge each of you to stay committed to this quest by participating in the examination. I look forward to widespread use of the title, Nationally Certified in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. ♦